



NEWS

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Secretary Norton Names Johnnie Burton Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management *MMS director to serve in dual capacity until selection of permanent successor*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton today named Minerals Management Service (MMS) director Johnnie Burton to serve as Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management.

Burton currently serves as the director of the Minerals Management Service and will retain her current responsibilities while serving in the newly assigned capacity. She was appointed by Secretary Norton to serve as MMS director in March of 2002 and has guided the agency in the management of the nation's offshore energy resources and in its collection and disbursement of billions of dollars in mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian leases. She will take on her new duties upon the departure of Assistant Secretary Rebecca Watson, whose resignation is effective October 28 and will serve in the acting position until a permanent replacement for the post is nominated by President Bush and confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

“With her long experience in the field of energy development and her careful ability to provide skilled management of our nation’s energy resources, Johnnie Burton is a valued colleague and a dedicated public servant,” Secretary Norton said today. “Johnnie Burton is a key force in managing our nation's vast energy resources -- most recently supervising the restoration of oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico that was disrupted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. She has the background and experience to serve effectively in this challenging dual role.”

Before joining the Department of the Interior, Burton served as director of the Wyoming Department of Revenue, serving in the governor’s cabinet from 1995 to 2002. Before that, she served in a leadership role in various energy exploration and service companies and was a member of the Wyoming House of Representatives from 1982 to 1988.

Burton was born in French Algeria, immigrated to the United States in 1963 and became a U.S. citizen in 1968. In 1958, she completed the Baccalaureat de l'Enseignement Secondaire (option Philosophie) from the Lycee Fromentin in Algiers, Algeria. She completed the Licence-es-Lettres, English, Diplome d'Enseignement from the Universities of Algiers in Algeria and in Paris, France, in 1962. She holds a master's degree (1974) from the University of Wyoming. She studied at the University of Arkansas and has completed management training by The Presidents Association and Duke University.

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